Foreign arms and training for naxalites

1039. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that Naxalites have been acquiring arms from China and Pakistan and training through LTTE in Sri Lanka for their nefarious activities in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken up the issue with foreign Governments in this regard; and

(d) if so, their response and if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No confirmed reports have come to the notice of the Government.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Relaxing of visa rules for students

1040. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the US proposes to relax visa rules for students, tourists etc;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether India also proposes to relax these rules to attract foreign students and tourists; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) On 17 January 2006 the US Department of State and Department of Homeland Security announced measures to speedup the processing of US visas. It is Government's understanding that to decrease the wait time for visa appointments for travellers, American Embassies and Consulates have now established procedures to expedite the processing of business visas and are working closely with local American Chambers of Commerce in many countries to expedite the visa process for bona fide business

travellers. US authorities also announced that in the coming months, US Homeland and State Department will work to expand the length of time that foreign students can arrive and live in US. Student visas would be issued up to 120 days before classes begin, as compared to 90 days under current regulations, and students would be allowed into US 45 days in advance of their studies, as compared to 30 days at present.

(c) and (d) India already has a policy that facilitates the visit of tourists and international students who wish to study in India.

Autonomy of Baluchistan province

†1041. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has taken exception to India's Comment on the explosive situation generated from the groundswell of public opinion on autonomy in Baluchistan province of Pakistan;

(b) whether it is a fact that in order to suppress the human rights voice of Baluch nationals following independence the Government of Pakistan have continued to take oppressive militancy action;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government of India have taken exception to all types of coercive action being taken by Government of Pakistan to suppress the demand of autonomy in Baluchistan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) In response to a question on 27 December 2005, spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs had said that the Government of India has been watching with concern the spiralling violence in Baluchistan and the heavy military action, including the use of helicopter gunships and jet fighters by the Government of Pakistan to quell it. He expressed the hope that the Government of Pakistan would exercise restraint and take recourse to peacful discussions to address the grievances of the people of Baluchistan.

In an immediate press release by Pakistan on 27th December 2005, "the spokesperson rejected the Indian statement as unwarranted and baseless. Suggesting that the statement was tantamount to meddling in

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.